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**Broad Support Evident for Senate
Bill to Improve Endangered Species Act**

California Natural Resources Group commends Senators Crapo and Lincoln for bi-partisan effort to update ESA through Senate Bill 2110

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (December 15, 2005) - The California Natural Resources Group (CNRG), a statewide environmental advocacy coalition, today reiterated long-standing support for improvements to the Endangered Species Act and welcomed the introduction of Senate Bill 2110, the Collaboration for the Recovery of the Endangered Species Act (CRESA). CNRG is comprised of local government and public agencies, labor, business, agriculture, forestry, mining, housing and development interests.

“We would like to thank Senator Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-Arkansas) for their bi-partisan efforts to introduce this bill before the Senate,” said Cliff Moriyama of CNRG. “It is our hope that the collaborative and incentive-based approach of their legislation will both increase the protection and recovery of listed species while also minimizing litigation and the disruptive economic impacts of the current Act.”

The introduction of CRESA follows the passage of H.R. 3824, The Threatened and Endangered Species Act, which cleared the House of Representatives in mid-September. Both bills aim to strengthen voluntary conservation partnerships and to return the primary focus of the Act to species recovery.

For years, local governments have participated in cooperative conservation projects that have protected 590 species on 39 million acres, while making it possible to provide important civic infrastructure. CRESA would guarantee that the time, money and effort put into these voluntary plans will no longer be jeopardized by costly lawsuits that preclude the construction and maintenance of transportation projects, flood control systems, prisons and other public facilities.

“Updating the 33-year-old law would benefit species, but also the economy,” said Moriyama. “The incentive-based approach of CESRA would encourage private landowners to participate in

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species protection, while allowing property owners, municipalities and businesses to provide for the housing, power, food and water demands of a growing population.”

CESRA would remove many of the burdens of the current Act that have hampered job creation, community development and other improvements.

Agricultural leaders also welcome the new Senate bill. Without reform, ranchers and farmers will continue to suffer from the Act as litigation continues to disrupt and limit crucial water supplies needed for the irrigation of crops. Lawsuits make it difficult to make necessary improvements to the water distribution systems that provide sufficient water for agricultural and urban use. The improvements now up for debate in the Senate would improve ESA and protect vital water deliveries throughout the West.

About CNRG

The California Natural Resources Group is a diverse coalition of public and private stakeholders concerned about the current, broad-sweeping application of the Endangered Species Act. CNRG's Mission is to ensure that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service comply with the letter and spirit of the Endangered Species Act, so that species are appropriately protected and human and economic impacts are fully assessed, accurately accounted for, and properly addressed.

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Additional Media Contacts

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Because ranching and farming don’t permanently change the landscape, ag interests do not often use HCPs; nevertheless they support protecting Habitat Conservation Plans through improvements to ESA.

Karen Keene (Leg. Representative, CA State Assn. of Counties) **Ph: 916/327-7500 Ext. 511**

Keene is also Agriculture & Natural Resources Federal Legislative Coordinator for CSAC. She can assist in reaching well-informed contacts at California Counties.

Dennis Oliver (Communications Director, CA Alliance for Jobs) **Ph: 415/305-3687**

The alliance represents the construction industry, which is concerned that flaws in the ESA would make infrastructure improvements unachievable, delayed or overly expensive.